

THE TERRIBLE TRAGEDY AT WINDSOR LOCKS. TRIPLE MURDER IN A BROTHEL.

GREAT EXCITEMENT.

SEVERAL ARRESTS.

A meeting of the town authorities of Windsor Locks Tuesday evening was interrupted by a man named Baker who came to announce a murder at a spot called "Bull Run," on the Granby and Windsor Locks road. The meeting was immediately adjourned and a party of about twenty men procured carriages and drove to the scene of slaughter, arriving about nine o'clock. There they found the house entirely dark, and on forcing an entrance discovered the three mutilated corpses of Timothy Billings, the keeper of the house, a woman called his wife, and another named Julia Hayes, lying on the floor and weltering in their own blood and gore, while portions of the clothes of the Billings woman were on fire and one of her arms was almost burned off. A jury was immediately impaneled consisting of Daniel Montgomery (foreman), Dr. Burnapp, James T. Coogan, Robert Waller, John L. Beckham, J. A. Rogers, George Allen, William Baldwin, Henry Douglass, W. Stein, Joseph White and W. Olds, who after viewing the victims of this cold-blooded outrage and noticing the premises and surrounding circumstances, as well as the dim light of lanterns would permit, adjourned until ten o'clock Wednesday morning, at which time they met and again adjourned to Thursday at ten o'clock, awaiting the possibility of the arrest of suspected parties.

The particulars of the affair which a reporter for THE COURANT, who visited the scene Wednesday afternoon, was able to gather are as follows:—Between 3 and 4 o'clock Tuesday afternoon, two "pack peddlers," named Myer Stockardt and Jacob Newsbom, were on their way over the Granby and Windsor Locks road, intending to take the road northward for Suffield at the point where it crossed the road they were traveling upon. At this junction is the place called Bull Run.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREMISES.

The tavern or brothel, whatever it may be called, was a place of the worst reputation. It is situated at the northwestern of the corners made by the crossing of the Suffield and Poquonnock and the Windsor Locks and Granby roads. It is distant about two miles from Windsor Locks and about four from Suffield. It has two doors, one on the east side, opening directly into the bar-room, and one on the southwest corner, which opens into the back room. Between the back room and the bar-room is a larger apartment, in which stands a cooking stove and which was the "living-room" of the occupants of the house. Out of the middle room there opens a small bed-room which opens by another door into the passage-way behind the bar. A door also connects the bar-room and the middle room directly. No house is within three-quarters of a mile of this, and none whatever is within sight or hearing, as gloomy pine groves surround the sandy waste on which the house stands, and shut it off from all witnesses, making it the fitting scene of some fearful tragedy—and many rumors say that this is not the first murder that has taken place there. Not very long ago, during the month of October, a woman inmate of the house killed herself by taking morphine, and in August a man who had been at the house for several days in company with the woman Hayes, one of the victims of the recent slaughter, was found dead under the pine trees within a rod or two of the place. Circumstances indicated that he had been robbed and drugged to death by the inmates of the house, but the arrest and examination of Billings and his wife proved nothing, and a verdict of suicide had to be rendered. Other crimes are supposed to have been perpetrated there which have never come to light. The people talk of bodies buried by night in the sands near the building; of mysterious disappearances, and of strange sights seen by belated travelers. There have been a great many drunken creatures robbed of large and small amounts of money at this literally, den of thieves, and the entire locality has for years been accursed in the eyes of the respectable people of the adjoining towns.

THE PEDDLERS' STORY.

When the two peddlers approached the house two men ran out from the back door and around the north side to the Suffield road, in the pines, where they disappeared from sight. The two Germans approached the back door and knocked, hearing in return a faint "come in." The appearance of things was such as to frighten them; there were signs of trouble all about, and when they, on opening the door, saw blood upon the floor they quickly left, going around, as did the murderers, to the north of the house and the Suffield road. Here they came upon one of the murderers hidden in the bushes and he ran from them into the woods and joined his companion, after which both crossed the Suffield road higher up, from the east to the west side, and disappeared finally in the woods. The peddlers were frightened from their course and decided to go to Windsor Locks instead, as they feared to follow the tracks of the murderers. On the Locks road, a short distance from the house, they found two men named Baker and McCarroll, in the employ of Mr. Samuel Austin, of Suffield, spreading tobacco stalks upon the fields. These men they accosted and told them there was trouble at the house. All went back to it together, and here begins

THE STORY OF THE WORKMEN.

They say that while at work in the field, which is bounded on the west side by the narrow grove of pines that grows along the Suffield road, they saw two men about four o'clock pass out into their lot from the grove, walk northward and then re-enter the woods and take the same course that the peddlers attribute to them. Both parties agree in their descriptions of the murderers. They were, one of them a light overcoat and rubber boots that attracted particular attention, and the other a butcher's blouse of gray blue color that was noticed immediately.

After the men reached the house they tried the bar-room door and found it locked. The back door, however, they opened a little but something was in its way which they soon saw was the corpse of a woman. Looking in to the next room they saw another and a little smoke, and having seen enough they shut the door and returned to their work in the field, after which they went home toward Suffield carrying the peddlers with them. Baker went to Windsor Locks in the evening and incoherently, with some agitation and contradiction, reported the affair. The reason he assigns for carrying such a fearful secret for four hours is that he was afraid of being discharged if he left his work. He is an intemperate man, and was a little intoxicated the night of the murder. He has, too, been in the habit of frequenting the house, although he is not the only person of such habits in the vicinity. He has been examined and discharged, no one after investigation thinking he was guilty, although no search of his premises has been made to look for traces of the deed. He remains about the town without giving any signs of guilt.

The peddlers were examined and locked up, but they desired subsequently to go to Suffield to sell their wares, and were allowed to do so Wednesday on promise of returning.

The Story of the Citizens—Appearance of the House and the Victims.

When the party of citizens went out, headed by Constables Croly and Beckham, they formed two parties, one going to the front and the other to the back door. The party at the front of the house broke in the locked door with a rail, and on entering, found

THE BODY OF TIM. BILLINGS

lying across a stool, with his head against the wall and his legs stretched out from his chair toward the middle of the room, while his arms hung down by his side. Under his head was a bag of oats, and by his chair lay a bound volume of *Harper's Magazine*. When they attempted to lift him, the back of his head fell off and his brains fell out upon the oat-bag. On the walls, blood and brains were scattered, and even from the ceiling drops of blood, brain and gore were hanging down, showing that the blow upon the head must have been very powerfully dealt to have caused such a fearful scattering. It appears to have been done with some dull instrument which broke rather than cut the skull.

The party at the back door pushed their way in and found the

CORPSE OF JULIA HAYES

lying with her head towards the door, and with a great round hole as large as a quarter of a dollar piece cut through her throat. As she lay in the way of entrance, the body was taken up and carried out of doors. Some of the party say that a little bodily warmth still remained at that time.

Both parties found the house full of smoke, and, as the back door was opened and admitted air, flames appeared in the middle room. On entering this the body of

THE BILLINGS WOMAN

was found burning, one arm being almost burnt off and most of her clothes destroyed. Water was thrown upon her and soon the flames were extinguished. An examination of the body showed two wounds in the head caused by some blunt instrument but no cuts from any knife. The wounds of this victim of the tragedy were pronounced by Dr. Burnapp as not necessarily fatal, if proper attention had been given to them immediately. Upon the floor of the middle room were a carpet and a Julia mat upon which the body lay. These would burn very slowly, especially in a house where there was no circulation of air, and they had so burned as the large amount of smoke indicated. It is therefore a fair supposition that the fire had been burning a long time as it had already done so much towards the destruction of the woman, besides burning several holes in the floor.

A SEARCH OF THE PREMISES

was made and no one but the dead was found anywhere in the building. In the drawer behind the bar nearly \$500 in money was found.

and in a woman's stocking up stairs there were discovered about \$225, making over \$700 in ready money that was to be had in the building. In the charred parts of the middle room was found a bread knife with the handle burned in two, the blade was marked with blood and is thought to have been the instrument used to kill the Hayes girl, and subsequently thrown into the flames. If they were then started, or at least upon the floor away from the room where it had been employed. Behind the bar was a double barreled gun, loaded, and up stairs was a seven shooter revolver, showing that if the attack had been at all anticipated there would have been a better defense.

The bodies were confined and taken to the town hall about 3 o'clock Wednesday afternoon. The house was then locked up but the windows were left unlocked and people entered through them, the fire too, at the time of the first entering, caused some disarrangement of things by people in a hurry, and consequently the different articles in the room may have been many of them disturbed after the affair took place and before THE COURANT reporter arrived on the scene, which was about 3 o'clock Wednesday. At that time the bar-room in front had been used to lay out the bodies in and, save the magazine on the floor and the bag of oats with its gory marks, the whole order of the room had been changed. In the middle room the half-cooked meal was still upon the stove, the rocking chair was drawn up to the window and a bound copy of *Godey's Lady's Book* lay opened upon the table at an essay upon "Enthusiasm," a work-basket had been knocked off the mantel-piece and the apools were scattered over the floor. A singular thing in this room was the position of a kerosene lamp which lay between the arm of the rocking chair and the window resting between the two, where evidently it had been knocked in some struggle; on the floor was another kerosene lamp with the brass parts bent as if stepped upon. The back room was bare. On the floors of all the rooms pools of blood and gore presented the most sickening sight, the carpets and the bare boards alike being stained and branded with the signs of murder.

THE VICTIMS

were an utterly worthless set. *William* less than two weeks the Hayes woman was in the depot at Windsor Locks in a state of beastly intoxication; she was by suspicion seriously implicated in the mysterious death of the so-called suicide last fall, and her being an inmate of the place was enough to stamp her as a person almost beyond pity. The Billings were worthy of the house that they kept, and during the two or three years of their tenure there, it is said to have sunk even lower than it had been before, if possible. Billings himself is reported as having been very respectably connected, the son indeed of a very worthy man, which makes his fall still more sad and admonitory.

THE CLUES TO DETECTION

are the dress that the men wore; the fact of a general dislike to the house and its occupants; the known habit of Billings to keep money on hand in large quantities, and the fact that three persons were carried to the house Monday from Windsor Locks by a livery man, who left them there and came back alone. At a later hour it was reported that two guns, one broken at the stock, and the other whole, had been found in the pines near the house. It was not decided whether they had belonged to Billings or not, but they were looked upon as the instruments of the deed. If they do not belong to him they will prove of great aid. A report was circulated that when the party of examination first went to the house, a man was seen staggering off to the woods, but could not later be found. This arose from the fact that Constable Beckham went around alone to the north side of the house, and slipped on the ice as he went. Some one saw him and started the story therefrom. But it had no other foundation, and it is probable that the murderers were far away at the time.

ARRESTS.

A number of arrests were made Wednesday by the authorities. Officers McCarty and Flynn from this city took the early train and Officer McElroy went up afterward. The officers took the cars from there later in pursuit of suspected persons, except Officer McElroy, who subsequently returned to Hartford. The dress of the murderers with its blouse and rubber boots throw suspicion upon all men with such articles of clothing, and accordingly several unsuspecting teamsters came to grief temporarily, but were soon released. When the reporter left Windsor Locks at six o'clock there were three men in the "lock-up," Charles Day, a butcher; Edward Loomis, a saloon keeper, and George Grauger, who lives in Suffield, while one George Humanson and another man were supposed to be under charge of officers bringing them from Thompsonville. Grauger is said to have been one of the three men carried over to the house Monday night, and it is also said that he was absent from his home near Suffield until Tuesday night, when he returned and set out next morning in a borrowed suit of clothes, in which outfit he was captured. He is young, apparently scarcely 20 years old, and seems hardly capable of such a deed. The others are said to know the way to the house, at least, if they were not there.

THE CONJECTURES

that THE COURANT reporter arrived at were that the object of the murder was money; in support of which theory is the robbery of the watch and \$60 in money from the person of Billings who always carried an abundance of money with him; that the murderers had planned the affair deliberately, had taken a quiet part of the day when no one was likely to stop there, as was shown by the general occupation in reading of the victims, and that the approach of the peddlers disconcerted them and they lighted the fire in the hope of covering their traces; that their dress was probably a disguise well seen from its nature, and that it is now lying discarded somewhere among the pine woods; that the murderers must have been themselves aware of the habits of Billings, and that probably they struck across the country, after throwing off their disguises, and took the Connecticut Western railroad at Tariffville, by which they could, via Hartford or Millerton, have reached New York last night, or perhaps the Western road at Westfield and went on to Albany. The strange conduct of Baker, the workman, can be explained on the ground of the general fear the ignorant have of acknowledging that they have even any knowledge of murders for fear of getting into trouble thereby. As yet nothing but conjecture is possible, and one may turn out as good as another.

The unfed dogs of the murdered man were whining for their master about the premises all Wednesday, and a crowd of curious persons went to and from the house from morning till night, each forming a different conclusion and dropping it as soon as he heard another.

The murder has created great excitement in the community. The selectmen have offered a reward of \$300 for the arrest of the guilty parties, and every effort is being made to secure them. The character of the murdered persons is such that they will not be missed by the better class of people, and the closing of their house is a public benefaction, but the deed is no less an outrage upon the public and as such deserves the fullest punishment that the law affords; for in cold, bloodthirsty cruelty it has had few equals in the history of Connecticut crime. There is little sympathy expressed for the victims, but the sincerest wishes of all are everywhere expressed that the murderers may be captured, and receive the penalty they so well deserve.